THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. III. January 14, 1938 Shebat 12, 5698 No. 18.

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CORRESPONDENCE

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EDITORIALS

History in Its Anecdotage

THE American Jewish Historical Society which held its 41st annual meeting recently, is an organization for research in American Jewish history. During the years of its existence, the Society has issued thirty-four volumes of publications, maintains a collection of books, manuscripts, and historical objects, and has thus safeguarded for posterity information and material that otherwise might have disappeared and been permanently lost. In providing a research organization for historical information, the Society is making a genuine contribution to Jewish historiographers, and the Jewish people.

At its recent meeting papers were read on a variety of themes. As was to be expected they were of varying interest and value. The bottom was reached in the attempt to prove that the American colors (red, white and blue) had long ago been hinted at in the Zohar, book of mysticism and mystery, and many even have been proclaimed at Mt. Sinai. The heights were reached in Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach's brilliant address on the Constitution of the United States and Dr. David de Sola Pool's delightful description of the life and personality of Rabbi Gershom Mendes Seixas. Between these extremes were papers read by a charming young lady, a lawyer interested in the legal aspects of a case involving some forgotten Jew, and other gentlemen from all phases and walks of life.

The American Jewish Historical Society could increase its usefulness as a learned society if certain changes of policy were made. These suggestions are offered because of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST's awareness of the great value of the Society at present, and its desire to see that value to Jewish knowledge and life increased.

In the first place, there is an absolute need for the recognition of the professional historian. The professional historian is an expert, a trained mind in the field of history. He knows not only how to collect facts, but to evaluate them. He can be relied upon for accuracy both in the fact itself and in the possible implications of the fact. At present the Society permits almost anyone who believes he has something to say to read a paper. In consequence some twenty-five papers were scheduled for discussion by men and women who were, for the most part, untrained albeit well-intentioned folk. Thus, the Society must lose standing as a thoroughly scientific society before whom spe-

cialists appear to present new found information. From being a learned society hot on the search for truth, it becomes a pleasant conclave of dilletante historians whose main business in life, however, is the rabbinate, the law, medicine, teaching, and just so-so.

Secondly, there should be a change in attitude towards the past. There is no doubt that the past is the well from which we draw information. But the past as such cannot produce history. It may produce chronicles, gossip, memories, reminiscences. History is not merely an account of men's lives as such, nor the collection of art-objects, nor even the recounting of incidents. That type of history has long been passé in the world of general scholarship. History is the study of social forces that involve all phases of a people's life, economic, political, cultural, religious. To trace to his lair some insignificant, forgotten man and his deed to a piece of ground may be a species of good detective work; it is not history. The past becomes of historical interest when it is found relevant to the present. What might otherwise thrill as history, merely amuses as gossipy anecdote.

And finally, there should be proper guidance in the selection of program and purpose. Hit and miss methods, helter-skelter themes and research, evidence lack of clear-sighted purpose and scientific guidance. Far better would it have been to have five serious papers on historic themes relevant to present-day Jewish life than twenty-five *membra disiecta* of historical wreckage. Proper scientific guidance would designate fields of research, would eschew the merely queer or exotic, the isolated incident, the insignificant personality. It would lead into those large areas of institutional development, of communal change, growth and decay; it would concern itself with relevant history, leaving to library-moles the joy of unearthing the strange, the exceptional, the odd.

It may well be that real American Jewish history cannot yet be written. After all, the American Jewish community is still comparatively young. It has not yet developed the consciousness of an American Jewish past. To be sure, more and more that consciousness is revealing itself. The very circumstance that brought the American Jewish Historical Society into being testifies to the awareness among some Amercan Jews that we already have a history. Undoubtedly many of the founders of the Society were mainly interested in the Society as a means of proving that the Jew was a good, old American. That is very necessary. It is important to show that the Jew is a good patriot and citizen. But more must be expected and must be demanded of a body of learned men. We need today to see the American Jewish community in terms of the development of American Jewish insituations and of an American Jewish civilization whose roots are nourished by a past that is rich in experience and personalities. Such is real history—history that informs, makes significant, and guides the present. Otherwise it is at best archaeology, at worst a kind of anecdotage.

Defend Democracy With Other Americans

THERE was a Jewish episode in the recent skirmish between Mayor Hague and the friends of civil liberty in Jersey City. Prior to the opening of hostilities the local Jewish Center had included in its season's series of open forums an address by Mr. Roger Baldwin, prominent liberal and director of the American Civil Liberties Union. The address was to have been delivered at the very time when the Mayor had abrogated all civil liberties, in a move against a group of C.I.O. organizers who were trying to contact Jersey City workers. In order not to embarrass the administration the Center Board, against vigorous protests from the director of the institution, at once pro-

ceeded to cancel Mr. Baldwin's address. They offered the lame excuse that they had suddenly discovered a conflict in schedule and that Mr. Baldwin therefore had to give way to another gentleman on the program.

Our first impulse was to condemn the Board unequivocally. Jewish tradition, in its underlying trends, stands in sharp contradicton to any system of government that elevates the rights of property above the rights of human life, that will rank the vested interests of a small group of men above the rights of the great number to unite for the improvement of their conditions. Jewish rights rest on a democratic conception of American citizenship which recognize the rights of all minorities, economic as well as cultural, to the peaceful pursuits of their legitimate interests. Any support to the cause of Mr. Hague is, therefore, a betrayal of the best in Jewish tradition, and, in the long run, a betrayal of Jewish interests too.

But on second thought we were inclined to be more sympathetic with the representatives of the Center. Mr. Hague apparently has the full support of Jersey City public opinion. The local Chamber of Commerce, the churches, a number of A. F. of L. labor unions, a host of fraternal, civic and veterans' organizations all seem to have approved, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, the fascist conduct of the city's mayor. For the Jews to have given a platform to Mr. Baldwin would have exposed them to criticism. As things get misinterpreted nowadays it would have led to the familiar cry that the Jews are communists. It would have fed the flames of anti-Semitism, certainly with the city's preponderant Catholic population that has unfortunately been taught to identify all militant liberalism or trade unionism with communism.

Does this mean that the Jews must retreat from the social scene and ultimately betray their own interests by not joining in the struggle for the preservation of American democracy? Certainly not. But it does mean that the Jews must not isolate themselves from other progressive Americans and fight as an exposed minority. There is no reason, for example, why Mr. Baldwin should, in the first place, have been scheduled to speak for a specifically Jewish audience. What Mr. Baldwin has to say is vital for all Americans, Jews and non-Jews alike, and his appearance should have been sponsored not by the Jewish Center but by representative organizations or individuals from the community at large, the Jewish Center included. A Jewish Center forum will render sufficient service by presenting speakers who have a Jewish message for its Jewish audience. The struggle for the preservation of American democracy is not a Jewish problem, but an American problem, and it will be served best when all democracy's friends, Jews as well as non-Jews, will join in common service to a common cause.

Palestine Partition, Past and Present

By SAMUEL ROSENBLATT*

Introduction

THE burning Jewish issue of the moment is the Palestine Partition plan recommended by the Special British Royal Commission in the report of its investigations of the most recent disturbances in the Holy Land. Great Britain, tired of acting as policeman in Palestine and of arbitrating the differences between Jews and Arabs, proposes, as a solution of the Jewish-Arab question, to divide the country into separate Jewish and Arabic sections, each of which is to constitute eventually a sovereign, independent state exercising all the functions and prerogatives of selfgoverning national entities.

The proposal is for us Jews, who have been a people without a country for nearly two thousand years, something so startlingly new, that we cannot react to it except in extremes. There are some among us who are so enthusiastic about the very idea of a Jewish state, they are ready to accept it on any terms. Others, again, are so keenly disappointed over this second restriction of the territory open to Jewish colonization and the further reduction of the historic boundaries of Erez Yisrael, that they see no merit in the plan at all and are for rejecting it in toto. Only the future can decide whether the "yeas" or the "noes" have been right. But since the future is unknown, our only guage in the present are the experiences of the past. Not that the past is always a safe and competent guide to follow. Circumstances change. The needs of today do not exactly correspond to those of yesterday. The political set-up in the world at the present time is different from what it was, and what may have worked once may no longer succeed now. Nevertheless the study of the past is not to be brushed aside as being entirely without value, for history does to a certain extent repeat itself and some worthwhile lessons can be learned by "remembering the days of old and considering the years of many generations ago . . . when the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance . . . and set the borders of the peoples," [1] among them those of the "children of Israel" in the land of Israel.

I

One of the important results yielded by such a review is the discovery that the ideal Erez Yisrael that had, according to Scripture, been promised to Father Abraham and that was supposed to extend from "the river of Egypt to the Euphrates" [2] had never in its entirety been in the possession of the Jewish people, and that even the more realistic boundaries outlined in the 34th chapter of the book of Numbers had only been approximated during a total of one hundred years at the utmost.[3] I say "approximated" because of the sea-coast from Haifa up and from Jaffa down was never at any one time completely in Jewish hands, and, as for what is today called Transjordania, direct Jewish rule over the whole extent of its territory lasted no more than perhaps a decade or two.[4]

To list the data of our historic records in greater detail the occupation of larger Palestine by the Jews as a people (we skip the Patriarchal period during which Israel's ancestors are pictured as having been only a family of shepherds roaming the steppes of ancient Canaan, as the Bedouins still do today, without permanently settling down in any one place), begins roughly speaking about the year 1250 B.C.E.[5] towards the end of the

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career of Moses after years of wandering about in the wilderness. The first section to be conquered was the northern half of Transjordania, the districts of Gilead and Bashan,[6] which became the domain of the shepherd tribes of Reuben and Gad and of the half-tribe of Menasseh.[7] The southern portion, it will be recalled, was not to be touched, for *there* lived the children of Ammon and Moab, related to Israel through their ancestor Lot, the nephew of Abraham.[8]

After the death of Moses and under the leadership of his successor, the Ephraimite Joshua the son of Nun, Israel crossed the Jordan into Canaan proper, which had been shown to the Lawgiver from the top of Mount Neboh shortly before his demise. It took Joshua fourteen years, according to tradition, to conquer and divide the land.[9] But as we learn from the very first chapter of the book of Judges the conquest was by no means complete. The original inhabitants of the country were not exterminated as they were supposed to have been, but continued to live in the midst of the conquerors. Many celebrated Canaanitish towns and their suburbs had not been taken. The Benjaminites had failed to dislodge the Jebussites from Jerusalem. The Menassites had been unable to seize Bet Shean and Taanak and Dor and Yibleam and Megiddo. No more successful were the Ephraimites with Gezer, the tribe of Asher with Acco, Sidon and other Phoenician cities, or the tribes of Zebulun, Naphtali and Dan with certain towns that lay in their territory. All these, as archeology has shown, were important urban centers, seats of a comparatively advanced civilization, and they made up a substantial portion of the land of Palestine.[10]

The history of Israel in the land of Israel during the entire period of the judges, which lasted for about two centuries, was replete with rebellions on the part of the natives against the conquerors and with inroads by neighboring peoples who often sorely oppressed the children of Israel,[11] the individual tribes of which were only loosely bound together and unable singly to resist their enemies. This condition presisted until David the son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah established the kingdom, which for the first time united all the tribes of Israel under one military ruler.[12] Only then was Israel able not only to throw off the yoke of the strangers, but also to impose its yoke upon them. David, who was a soldier of ability, succeeded in subjugating nearly all of Israel's neighbors and in entering into friendly alliances with the rest.[13] The crowning act of his regime was the expulsion of the Jebussites from Jerusalem, the last Canaanite stronghold in the interior of the land of Israel, the establishment there of his royal residence and the selection of the city as the site of the central sanctuary.[14]

Thanks to these achievements Israel was at last secure in its possession of Canaan, and an Israelitish subject could travel under the protection of his government from Joppa on the shores of the Mediterranean in the West to the furthermost confines of Gilead and Bashan on the way to the Euphrates in the East and from the Lebanon Mountains in the North to Etzion Geber near Elath on the Gulf of Akabah, which leads into the Red Sea, in the South.

This situation, which must have taken David several years to bring about, continued during the entire forty-year reign of David's successor Solomon, who was able, by means of marital alliances with neighboring princes, to add somewhat to the domains bequeathed to him by his father.[15] Immediately after Solomon's death, however, the united kingdom fell to pieces again, splitting up into two unequal parts. Of these, the smaller, southern fragment, thenceforth known as *Judah* and embracing the territories of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty, while the remainder of the tribes, who dwelt to the North and on the other side of the Jordan River, set up a kingdom

of their own which is called in Jewish sources both *Israel* and *Ephraim.*

II

The division could not but weaken the power and prestige of Israel. One after another the neighboring tribes, that had been subjugated by David and paid tribute to him and to Solomon, fell away, often joining Israel's enemies. The two brother kingdoms did not always agree among themselves. During a great part of the two hundred years of their separate existence they were at sword's points with one another. Even in the face of common danger, the steady advance of the all-levelling Assyrian steamroller, were they unable to compose their differences and unite their forces for defense. The result was a foregone conclusion. In the year 732 B.C.E. the mighty king of Assyria nipped off the Eastern and Northern portions of the kingdom of North Israel. At one blow it lost all its East-Jordan provinces as well as the whole of Galilee. Ten years later another Assyrian ruler seized the remainder of the curtailed Israelitish state, demolished its capital Samariah and transferred most of the inhabitants of the land to the interior of the Assyrian empire, bringing to the country in their place people from other sections of the realm whose descendants became what were later known as "the Samaritans."

In the meantime North Israel's southern neighbor Judah had escaped annihilation only by being submissive to the power of Assyria and faithfully paying the tribute demanded by the latter. However its turn was not long in coming either. Less than twenty years after the destruction of Samariah the redoubtable Sennacherib invaded the little state, setting fire to its cities and taking possession of everything, except Jerusalem, which remained, in the words of the prophet, Isaiah, like a "hut in a vineyard" and a "lodge in a field of cucumbers," [16] and in which, to use Sennacherib's own expression found in the cuneiform inscriptions emanating from him, its king Hezekiah was "caught like a bird in a cage." Luckily for Judah something happened that forced Sennacherib to abandon the siege of Jerusalem. This permitted the kingdom to breathe freely again, and, thanks to the subsequent decay of the Assyrian empire, Judah was able to maintain its independence for another little while. It even added to its domain some of the territory that previously formed a part of the kingdom of North Israel. However, it was not to enjoy peace for long, for about a century after Sennacherib's investiture of Jerusalem, the Neo-Babylonians, who were the heirs of the Assyrian Empire in Asia Minor, swallowed up the tiny Judean state, destroying its capital Jerusalem together with the temple built by Solomon, leading the best portion of its inhabitants captive to Babylon, and thus putting an end to the first Jewish commonwealth.

III

Such were the fluctuations of Israel's fortunes during its first occupation of the Holy Land. Only for a fraction of that time, during the reign of Solomon and a part of that of his predecessor David, did its rule extend over wellnigh the whole of Palestine. Prior to the advent of the latter Israel was only one of several peoples struggling for domination over Canaan, and after the decease of Solomon its power and prestige receded again, until under the weight of world empires it collapsed altogether.

When, fifty years after the destruction of the first temple, Cyrus the Great of Persia had conquered Babylon, he permitted the Judean exiles, who felt so inclined, to return to the homeland. That it was not his intention to transform Palestine into an independent Jewish state is evident from the fact that the country continued to be governed as a Persian province by prefects responsible to the emperors of Persia. Like its mod-

ern counterpart, the Balfour Declaration, which stipulated for nothing more than the establishment of a Jewish *national home*—not a state—*in* Palestine, Cyrus' edict pertained only to the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem,[17] in other words the establishment of a Jewish religious community in the Holy Land.

When the exiles arrived, they found the country overrun by strangers, who had taken possession of the land that had been evacuated by its Jewish inhabitants. The Idumeans, descendants of Esau, once the vassals of the kings of Judah, had come up from the South and settled as far North as Hebron, the burial-place of the Patriarchs and the first capital of David. There were also Samaritans from the North, Ammonites and Arabs, who had crossed over from the other side of the Jordan, and people hailing from such Philistine cities as that of Ashdod.[18] These interfered seriously with the work of rehabilitation and harrassed and maligned the Jewish settlers from Babylon. The number of the latter was far from considerable. The first contingent that came with Zerubabel totalled, according to the figures given in the book of Ezra, no more than 49,897 souls.[19] The exact size of the group that immigrated more than half a century later with Ezra is not stated.[20] That it could not have been very large seems certain when one considers the small compass of the Jewish settlement in Palestine at the time. Its center was Jerusalem. From the capital as a focal point the Jewish towns and villages spread out in all directions, covering, to judge from the names listed in the 7th chapter of the book of Nehemiah, an area extending from Lud in the West to Jericho in the East and from Bethlehem in the South as far as Bethel to the North,[21] i.e., a radius of about twenty miles from Jerusalem. The Jewish community of Palestine was in other words entirely confined to a small portion of the former kingdom of Judah and without any access to the sea.

IV

The nearly three-hundred years that elapsed between the era of Ezra and Nehemiah and the Maccabean revolt are almost a complete blank in Jewish history. We have no clear idea of how the Jewish settlement in the Holy Land developed, nor any definite information about its political, social and religious institutions. All we know is that about the year 332 B.C.E., as a result of the conquest of Alexander the Great, Palestine again changed masters, becoming first a Macedonian and subsequently either a Syrian or an Egyptian province. Hellenic culture and the Greek language became dominant in it. Colonies of Macedonian soldiers were established at many points, and among the colonists that settled in the land there must also have been a good many Jews. At the time of the Maccabean rebellion against the antireligious decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C.E. considerable Jewish communities were already flourishing in Galilee and Transjordania, sections that had three-hundred years previously been completely Judenrein, for the Jews living in those sections, according to the report of the book of Maccabees, sent a request for help against their pagan neighbors to Judas Maccabeus.[22] Their transportation for safety's sake to Judea is an indication of the fact that those regions were then still sparsely settled by Jews. Yet it was with the assistance of this nucleus of Jewish residents that these two sections of Palestine were eventually judaized, and upon them that the Hasmonean kingdom, which towards the end of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (about 79 B.C.E.) had virtually reached the boundaries of David's empire, was founded.

It was not by means of their valor and their prowess in battle alone that the Hasmoneans were able to achieve the independence of the Jewish people. The decay of the Syrian empire and the friendship of the rising power of Rome also contributed greatly towards this re-

sult. The expansion of the Judean state, freed from the Syrian yoke, took place first in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea, to which it acquired an outlet through the harbor of Joppa. Then it grew till it included such Jewishly populated sections as Galilee and a part of Transjordania. Finally the intervening portions were added to the Jewish domain. The strictly Jewish districts of Palestine during the time of the second commonwealth were, however, always Judea, Galilee and Jewish Transjordania or Perea. The Mishnah and other tannaitic sources mention only these in speaking of Erez Yisrael.[23] שלש ארצות ... יהודה ועבר הירדן והגליל Samariah and such regions as the territory of the Decapolis as well as certain seacoast towns although for several decades they were in Jewish hands are not included, because they were inhabited mostly by non-Jews, and in times of unrest they would render communication between the Jewish districts difficult.[24] Besides, these sections were separated again from Jewish Palestine when in 63 B.C.E. Rome assumed control of the country, and they remained distinct and apart even during the reign of Herod who had for several decades (37 to 4 B.C.E.) again united all the former Jewish domains under the rule of one king professing the Jewish faith.

It is clear from all this that during the time of the second commonwealth, even more so than during the time of the first, Jews occupied only a part of greater Palestine, that, in short, partition existed then just as it is contemplated now. The chief difference between the former divisions of Palestine into Jewish and non-Jewish territory and that which is proposed by the Special Royal Commission now lies in the fact that they are geographically practically the reverse of each other. What was formerly *Palestine* —properly speaking the land of the "Philistines" from whom the name was derived—namely the southern coastland, the northern seashore, which once constituted a part of the territory of the Phoenicians, as well as Galilee, the "district of the gentiles," is now to become Erez Yisrael, whereas what used to be the *land* of *Israel* proper, namely the hill-countries of Judah and Ephraim, is to become Arab Palestine (Falastin). At best the new Jerusalem might be ceded to the Jewish state and become, under the present plan, a Jewish island in an Arab sea, just as in the time of David it had still been a Canaanitish island in a Jewish sea.

NOTES

[1] Deut. 32, 7, 8.
[2] Gen. 15.18.
[3] I. e. the latter half of the reign of David and the whole of the reign of Solomon, totalling roughly speaking about sixty years, the latter half of the reign of Alexander Jannaeus and the last two decades of the reign of Herod the Great.
[4] Cf. Guthe's *Bibelatlas.*
[5] Cf. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des Juedischen Volkes,* I, p. 29ff.
[6] Num. 21.21ff.
[7] Ibid. 32.1ff.
[8] Cf. Deut. 2.9ff. and 19ff.
[9] Cf. Babylonian Talmud Zebahim 118b.
[10] Cf. the accounts in the publications of the various archeological expeditions concerning the excavations at Megiddo, Gezer, etc.
[11] Cf. Judges 3.1ff.
[21] Cf. II Sam. 5.1ff.
[13] Ibid. 7.1ff. and 8.1ff.
[14] Ibid. 5.8ff.
[15] Cf. for this and what follows Graetz's *History of the Jews* and the corresponding sections in Dubnow's *Weltgeschichte.*
[46] Isaiah 1.8.
[17] Cf. Ezra 1.3ff.
[18] Cf. Nehemiah 4.1ff.
[19] Ezra 2.64ff.
[20] Cf. Ibid. 7.7ff.
[21] Cf. Nehemiah 7.26ff.
[22] Cf. I Maccabees 5.9:. and also S. Klein עבר הירדן היהודי
[23] Thus Baba Batra 3.2. Cf. also Shebi'it 6.1 and Hallah 4.8.
[24] Cf. B. T. Baba Batra 38a ff.
[25] Thus Isaiah 8.23.

Toward a Realistic Peace Policy

By Ben Zion Bokser

THE crisis in Japanese-American relations which has developed with the renewal of Nipponese aggression in China calls attention to the need for a revision in philosophy on the part of the peace forces of this country. The old program of our peace movement was ultimately based on the assumption that, under modern conditions, there was no essential difference between an offensive and defensive war, and that the interests of peace demanded disarmament on the part of the nation and the pacifist pledge on the part of the individual. Can that assumption still be maintained with the emergence of a series of fascist powers for whom war is part of their very political creed? The present offensive of Japan is but an illustration of what the fascist axis holds out for the world. Under the altered social circumstances our peace movement must rethink its basic assumptions and evolve a new and more realistic strategy of action.

The rethinking of our peace program has already begun, and new slogans are being developed. One hears very little about disarmament, but there is a good deal of pressure in favor of neutrality. It was one of the achievements of the recent Emergency Peace Campaign that neutrality was made into law; and many of the peace groups are demanding that this neutrality legislation be invoked in the present crisis. Some advocates of neutrality have gone so far as to denounce any gestures of sympathy toward China and they have opposed the growing movement to boycott Japanese goods. A recent Reconstructionist editorial took this position. But all agree that we must place an embargo on all traffic in ammunition, goods and services with all belligerents, regardless of our own sympathies, if we want to avoid the menace of military involvement.

There is a good deal of plausible reasoning that may be marshalled in support of neutrality. Was it not our war trade with the economic stakes that it developed in the allied cause which eventually pushed us into the ranks of the combatants? By refraining from participation in such trade, we should keep clear of those entanglements that would lead us to war. The advocates of neutrality argue moreover that by withdrawing indispensable American resources from both sides of the conflict we would actually bring about a more rapid termination of the war. Neutrality, then, would not only guarantee peace for America. It would be a factor for world peace too.

That it would be difficult to enforce neutrality is obvious. Our entire economic machine is rationalized to the production for the world market. Only a cooperative economy which would give the worker enough of the returns of industry to consume what he produced could maintain itself without the world market. It is extremely doubtful whether the present economic order would not collapse entirely if a number of the more important countries were involved in the war and we had to maintain neutrality for a sustained period of time. But let us assume that the American people could be induced to pay the price of peace and that they would be willing to reconstruct the economic machine so as to produce, not for the world market, but for home consumption. The difficulties involved in a policy of neutrality are more serious.

Neutrality would contribute to a more rapid termination of the war, but, as a result of our policy, that termination would in all likelihood be victory for the aggressor. It is quite obvious that the greater blow of an American embargo would fall on the victim, and not the aggressor, who will have prepared the exact time and place to strike most advantageously. Where is the fairness in tell-

ing the Chinese people that, because Japan has come to rain death upon their cities and ravage their territories, we must stop selling them medicine, food, and other supplies? To defend the law as fair because it applies to the aggressor also is like defending a law which forbids begging in the public squares on the grounds that it applies not only to the poor but to the rich too. American neutrality would be the best encouragement for the fascist powers to go ahead with their nefarious designs. Confident of the neutrality of other countries, how long would Hitler wait before attacking Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union?

Nor dare America feel too sanguine about her own security under a policy of isolation. For what is to prevent the aggressor, when he feels the time ripe, from striking us too? Following the pattern of fascist aggression in Spain, he would not even have to send an army to invade our shores. He could well accomplish his purpose by aiding an American fascist clique to seize the reigns of our government. That such a fascist clique would arise, particularly if we challenge vested interests in a move toward a cooperative economy, there can be little doubt in the mind of any one who knows the temper of the American ruling class.

Others have advocated the opposite of neutrality, collective security. According to this policy the democracies of the world ought to join together in some kind of alliance for mutual protection and defense. This is, in a sense, the logical development of the policy pursued by the present administration in Washington. It is, ultimately, the willingness to use military sanctions, in concert with other nations, in order to enforce treaties and stop the aggressor. There is no question that the crystallization of an alliance of the democratic powers would compel the aggressors to keep the peace, at least for a time. Eventually, however, this could not stop fascist aggression. Fascism, because of its excessive nationalism and the contradictions between the productive and distributive processes in its economy, will eventually have to explode in war. Collective security will then merely serve to extend the war on a larger scale. One shudders to think of the destruction of life, not to speak of property, that such a war would involve. The colossal losses sustained in the last war would probably be exceeded. Could civilization survive such a carnage? Anxious as we may be to stop fascist aggression we dare not think in terms of military sanctions!

Are there any other sanctions that may be invoked? There are. These sanctions are economic, and it is on the basis of economic sanctions that a new and more realistic peace policy must be constructed. No nation can wage a sustained war without drawing on the economic resources of such countries as the United States, the British Empire, and France. An embargo upon goods, services, and credits destined for Japan and a boycott on Japanese imports would deliver a telling blow at the most vulnerable point of the Japanese war machine—its economic base. Normal economic relations should of course be maintained with the nation attacked.

Would not such partiality provoke an attack upon the country practicing it? It is extremely unlikely. Formal state sanctions would not be invoked by one country alone, but by the democracies acting together in concert. An informal boycott on the part of progressive and peace-minded people can, of course, take place before the formal invocation of sanctions by the state, but the informal boycott, too, would not be confined to one country. It is, as a matter of fact, already now growing as a spontaneous movement in all democratic countries of the world. It would be suicide on the part of a country engaged in a major war to deliberately draw world powers, pledged to neutrality at least from a military point of view, into the ranks of her active combatant enemies. As a further guarantee against military involvement, we ought to withdraw our battleships and nationals

from the zone of war. Such of our nationals who would insist on remaining there would have to do so at their own peril.

Would economic sanctions be effective? Were they not tried and found wanting during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia? The answer is that no real sanctions were ever imposed on Italy. The commodity she needed most—oil—was sold to her regularly. The Italo-Ethiopian war was, moreover, of too short duration for sanctions to be effective. In a protracted war, however, the blows of economic pressure would have a most telling effect indeed. All considerations point to economic sanctions as the best compromise between military intervention and complete neutrality.

This formula is not without its hazards. Though it would not require renouncing the world market completely, a dislocation of our own economic life would nevertheless follow, and greater measures of socialism will have to be adopted in order to check the ensuing crisis. We should have to check the pressure groups who would want us to enter the war on the side commanding their sympathies, and whose course is linked up with their economic interests. But it is a formula which would enable us to defend our own national security and contribute to world peace without military involvement —the most fundamental need in a realistic policy of peace for the American people.

Needed: A Modern Prayer Book

By Max J. Routtenberg*

THE appearance of a new prayer book for Sabbath and Festival services, designed for use in the "Conservative Synagogue," is a long-awaited event. The vast majority of rabbis and laymen who are laboring in the vineyard planted by Solomon Schechter, have felt keenly the need for the adequate *siddur* which should give proper expression to their religious ideology. The present state of public worship in the three hundred or more Conservative Synagogues in this country leaves much to be desired. Though united by a common affiliation and common purposes, these synagogues are characterized by greatly varying and oftimes conflicting rituals. The different kinds of prayer books used, and the different uses made of the same prayer books, tend to destroy the sense of unity which we should expect to exist among these synagogues. The power and charm of public worship lie mainly in mass adherence and mass uniformity, and where these are absent the ritual of the synagogue loses its effectiveness.

Rabbi Morris Silverman's *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book*** is a serious and earnest attempt to introduce a unifying force in the widely divergent service rituals that prevail in Conservative Congregations. Basing this attempt on his many years of experience in his own synagogue, he has arranged what he believes should constitute the typical service of the Conservative Synagogue. This consists, in the main, of the basic framework of traditional prayers in Hebrew, interspersed with English responses and congregational singing. He has a very fine collection of responsive readings scattered through the prayer book for almost every conceivable occasion; numerous hymns and anthems in English and Hebrew; and special selec-

*Rabbi, Reading, Pa.

**Hartford, Conn., 1936.

tions, of an eclectic nature, for private meditation, placed strategically at such points in the service where the worshiper's attention is most likely to wander. With a special eye, perhaps, to the budget of the average synagogue, he has skilfully combined the prayers for the Three Festivals with the Sabbath liturgy. Though this necessitates much turning of pages and may involve some difficulties for the inexperienced and uninitiated worshiper, it will nevertheless be heartily approved by Boards of Directors. In general, the prayer book will appeal to all those who are not overly disturbed by the typical service in the typical Conservative Synagogue.

But to those rabbis and laymen who are deeply distressed about and keenly dissatisfied with the gross artificiality and empty pomposity of the ritual in their synagogues, the new prayer book will simply add salt to their wounds. They will see in it a complete readiness to accept without a struggle, and a willingness to cater to, the waning spiritual life and abysmal ignorance of those who attend the synagogue. There is no attempt made to tackle the fundamental problems involved in the whole system of public worship in the modern Conservative Synagogue. Simply to offer a modified version of the traditional prayers and to present them in a more palatable manner, represents an evasion of the basic issues.

For example, the inclusion of English transliteration of a number of the Hebrew selections, aside from the question of good taste, is a tacit admission of defeat. Rabbi Silverman accepts the fact that a large number of our worshipers cannot read the Hebrew text, and believes that he can capture their interest in the service by giving them the barbaric-looking transliterated text. It is very doubtful whether this "scheme" can afford the worshiper any more inspiration than a series of nonsense syllables would. But, primarily, it certainly has no place in any synagogue where the retention of Hebrew as a language of prayer is something more than a mere pretence.

Another illustration of the attitude of defeatism is the conspicuous omission of the afternoon prayers for the Sabbath and Festivals. In those synagogues where the *minha* service is still observed, the worshipers will have to fall back upon the less attractive and more inclusive and reliable *siddur*. In other words, these congregations will require two sets of prayer books, one for those who "attend services" and one for those who come to "daven." In general, it is difficult to find the principle followed for the inclusion of certain prayers and the rejection of others. Thus the thirteen hermaneutic principles of R. Ishmael and the two *Y'kum Purkons* are included, but the *Bameh Madlikin* and *Pitum Hak'tores* are nowhere to be found. Those who recite the former will surely resent the exclusion of the latter.

This book offers no new approach in the matter of presenting the service to the worshipers, and hence it marks little improvement over the existing "service" prayer books. If anything, the arrangement for Friday Evening Services is somewhat terrifying. The 123 pages which it requires (plus the Festival Evening Service) must appear very discouraging to the worshipers who expect to make the nine o'clock movie. It will hardly induce in them a proper mood for prayer.

It is our frank opinion that very little can be done to vitalize the Friday Night Services simply by "tampering" with the traditional prayers. All it does is create an air of artificiality which freezes any warmth or emotion which might be engendered. As presently constituted, the much lamented and deeply lamentable late Friday service serves only as a stagey, uninspiring prelude to the Rabbi's weekly discourse. And, it might be added, the majority of sermons suffer greatly from the unfavorable emotional "set" induced in the preacher by the services themselves. Many a rabbi would prefer to get up to preach to his congregation "cold"

rather than to submit to the debilitating effects of a dull, unimaginative, spiritless service.

If we are to have vital public worship in our modern synagogues we must be courageous enough to eliminate much of our traditional liturgy and abandon the present artificialities resulting from mechanical modernizations. Our prayers must give expression to the innermost needs of Jews as individuals, for self-realization, and as a people, for redemption. A prayer book with such an approach has yet to be composed.

Correspondence

ANTI-LYNCHING BILL A LUXURY

Sirs:

Your editorial "Eradicate Lynching" in your December 3, 1937 issue, voices the deep abhorrence felt by every decent person to the practice, the philosophy, the practitioners and the psychology of lynching. Nevertheless, estimable as are the object of its utter elimination and the purpose of the Wagner-Gavagan Anti-Lynching bill, a valid issue still exists as to whether that bill should become law.

It is not sufficient to point to the mass nature of the crime as adequate justification for the invasion by the Federal government of State jurisdictions. There are other, more paramount, considerations. Today, every act of government, of legislatures, of professional guilds—indeed of every kind of organizational activity, must be scrutinized from one standpoint, namely: the spread of reaction, which is the mother of totalitarianism. The swing of Europe towards Fascism is clearly influencing America. Continents, no less than, in astral fields, planets, tend to draw other continents into their ideological orbits. Today, perhaps more than ever before in history, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. We must not forget the complaisance of European liberals who were blind to reactionary gains stealthily made while they, Yogi-like, were absorbed in contemplation of immediate goals. In the greater part of Europe, it is too late for vigilance. But we in America, profiting by the piteous example of the older continent, should gravely pause, no matter how keen our sympathy with the purposes of the statute, before we support any bill that tends to increase centralized governmental power in this country. It may be that some states have not attained to the level of social outlook represented by the Federal government. But it needs only mention of the one-time Socialist Mussolini to remind us how power corrodes ideals. We have no assurance that a steadily encroaching Federal government will not forsake its standards and feed its appetite on the power it gains. Certainly, that condition in which States' sovereignty is strong is least conducive to the strengthening of Fascist trends in the Federal government. That, by all odds, is of greater importance than the continued existence of lynching, foul as is the practice—for it is obvious that in Germany, where the central government's power has become supreme, lynching, never before a problem there, has now become a daily governmental instrument. I had rather live in a free country in which mobs occasionally lynch, than in a regimented country where the government constantly lynches; and although that is not the alternative immediately posed by the Wagner-Gavagan act, it is not so remote as to be lightly dismissed. Let it not be forgotten that the evil of Fascism is today's "ikar"; all else is "tafel." In this critical hour, the present anti-lynching bill is a luxury we dare not afford.

New York D. I. KAP

BINDING THE DRIFTERS

Sirs:

Your editorial "Blame the Sun Spots" may be justified in its criticism of rabbis who, in one way or another, recommend to Jews that they "accept Jesus," but your comments regarding the announcement of the sermons of rabbis and quotations from them in the press, are evidence of a "holier-than-thou" attitude highly unbecoming a perodical, the staff of which is chiefly recruited from rabbis.

The leading newspapers of New York City have long made it a practice to quote from the sermons of Christian ministers delivered on Sunday morning, and more recently, from the Sabbath discourses of the rabbis. The column devoted to the Jewish sermons has been introduced because it was doubtless felt that the readers of the *Times* and *Tribune*, among them thousands of Jews throughout the country, should be able to read longer extracts than the space in the Monday morning issues permitted. Moreover since the Sabbath sermons are quoted, it is a further recognition by the community of our Sabbath. These newspapers have invited summaries of the discourses, and some rabbis, anxious not to be misquoted, supply the necessary text. If this material is not forthcoming the newspapers frequently telephone the rabbi or send a reporter to the Services for it.

What, pray, is objectionable in this procedure? If an occasional mistake is made in the

content of a sermon, it can be corrected later by the same rabbi, or by the opinions of colleagues, presented as an antidote. Why should the modern synagogue be a "hole-in-the-corner" affair? Why should the message of our pulpit be confined strictly to the environs of the Congregation? Has not the "Message of Israel" and similar radio programs won wide acclaim from Gentiles and Jews alike?

The display advertisements, to which your writer objects, are intended to reach the unaffiliated Jew. The ideal situation, of course, would be that Jews were all so pious that they would attend Sabbath Services as a matter of steady habit. Dealing with a condition, however, and not a theory, some of the metropolitan rabbis wish to draw to their synagogues the multitudes who are otherwise untouched by the message of the liturgy and the sermon. Sabbath Services are enhanced if some Congregations have a Sunday Service, comparable, in many respects, to the midweek or Sunday evening Forums elsewhere. Those synagogues which seek a broad base for the development of their religious, educational, social service and cultural activities, should not be made the target of invidious comment. After all, "these and these are the words of the Living God."

The rabbi, who preaches out of knowledge concerning the Jewish tradition, and endeavors to present the Jewish viewpoint on current problems, personalities and movements, is extending the boundaries of the synagogue's influence. The synagogue of today should be, in accordance with the needs of the hour—as it has always been in ages past during the decades of Jewish cultural prosperity—a house of worship, a house of study, a house of assembly and a house of the people. If some synagogues give considerable space to the announcement of their activities, it is not in a desire to "compete" with others; there are enough Jews in our community to fill every synagogue every Sabbath and every Sunday. It is because they wish to enrol as congregants the great throngs of "sermon shoppers," the great masses who constitute "crowds," but not congregations, as well as the hosts who are interested in everything except the teachings of the synagogue. And in this effort to bind drifters to the syngagogue with hoops of steel, the institutions, strong enough to undertake the enterprise, should not be singled out for abuse or scorn by any fellow-Jews, even by so capable a group as the editorial staff of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

DR. LOUIS I. NEWMAN

December 27, 1937

THE "OUTSIDE MAN"

Sirs:

In your editorial, "Blame The Sun Spots," you offer two explanations for the "Jesus sermons" that some rabbis preach during the Christmas and Easter seasons. Permit me, however, to point out that you have omitted the fundamental cause of this "occupational disease," namely, the desire to spread "good will."

In spite of the fact that they are spoken in the presence of Jewish congregations, these sermons are not preached to Jews. They are addressed unofficially to the Christians. Hence, the publicity. They are attempts at offering courteous obeisances at the shrine of the god of the powerful majority among whom we live.

As a matter of fact, there are many rabbis who are employed almost solely for that purpose. Such a rabbi's usefulness lies in the fact that among other things he can show the gentile world that Jews can speak English without an accent, that he is a "gentleman" and a "good fellow," and that Jews have "no horns." As the business man puts it, nobody comes to get salvation, knowledge or inspiration over the counter of the pulpit and when the rabbi goes out to sell those commodities, he is generally asked to leave his ecclesiastical gown in the Temple and be "just a friend" and a good fellow. The rabbi's work, therefore, soon ceases to be ministering to the needs of his Congregation, except for his visits to the sick and his performance of periodic ceremonials. He is the "outside man" representing his "people" to the Christian. It is a case of the congregation's vicariously finding favor in the eyes of a world whose anti-Semitism they dread.

It is very distressing always to have to fall back upon anti-Semitism as the cause for Jewish troubles. This has caused many Jews to forget and neglect the inner Jewish problem and to concentrate all their attention upon the elimination of this evil. This overemphasis may have prompted you to omit anti-Semitism from your consideration of the possible causes of this particular "ocupational disease."

However, anti-Semitism as a fundamental cause of these Jewish Christmas sermons is, I think, a fact that it is well for us to know it. The evidence for this is that the essential elements of the message are generally retracted by the preacher when he faces Jews without benefit of non-Jewish publicity. Furthermore, the praise which many Jews accord such a sermon, when they characterize it as "broad-minded," is probably due to their desire in turn to be treated with similar broad-mindedness. There is no greater praise for a Jew, who has little faith in the Jewish future, than to tell him that "after all, Jesus was a Jew," and that "Judaism is not much different from Christianity." This, if nothing else, makes his Jewishness bearable to him.

The cure for this "occupational disease" is implied in the last paragraphs of your editorial. The whole matter would be very trivial if it were solely an "occupational disease" among rabbis. Unfortunately, it is a disease caused by *lack* of occupation on the part of too many Jews, i.e., their failure to occupy themselves with Jewish interests other than anti-Semitism.

RABBI ARIO S. HYAMS

Dec. 30, 1937